In the Department of German and Russian

Chair. Associate Professor Arne Koch
Associate Professor Arne Koch; Assistant Professor Alicia Ellis; Visiting Assistant Professor Rory Bradley; Faculty Fellow Carmen Manektala-Braun; Language Assistant Amalie Williamson

The German program emphasizes the acquisition of superior skills in the German language as the basis for the study of the literatures and cultures of the German-speaking world. Unless otherwise noted, all courses are taught in German as students continue to hone their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Upper-level courses provide training in close reading and analysis of literary and cultural texts in order to further students’ understanding of a culture different from their own. Students at all levels explore literature and film alongside culture and politics as well as history and contemporary affairs.

Majors in German studies are encouraged to study their entire junior year in a German-speaking country; majors and minors are expected to spend at least one semester abroad. Study-abroad options include approved programs in Berlin, Munich, Freiburg, Tübingen, Salzburg, and Vienna. The German faculty welcomes inquiries from students regarding the different programs and the one-semester and full-year options.

The major in German studies and the German minor provide excellent preparation for students who wish to pursue German-related grant opportunities, employment in international companies and organizations, or careers in government or academics.

Requirements for the Major in German Studies

The major in German studies requires 10 semester courses: six courses taught in German numbered above 127 including a 200-, a 300-, and a 400-level course and four additional courses chosen from the German curriculum, taken abroad, or chosen from courses with a substantial German component in departments such as Art, Government, History, Music, and Philosophy. Once declared, all majors must take at least one course in the German program each semester they are on campus until graduation.

Requirements for the German Minor

The minor in German requires six courses in the German program beginning with German 126, including a 200- and a 300-level course. Students who enter the program at the intermediate or advanced level should consult with their advisor in German regarding course selection.

The following statements also apply:

- The point scale for retention of the major and the minor is based on all required and approved courses numbered above German 127 for the major and German 126 for the minor.
- No major requirement may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.
- Transfer of credits for courses from other institutions, including study abroad, will be evaluated by the advisor in German on an individual basis.
- Teacher certification: Students desiring certification for teaching German should consult the faculty in German and in the Education Program.

Courses Approved for the Major in German Studies

Anthropology
- 252 Language in Culture and Society

Art
- 278 19th-Century European Art

Cinema Studies
- 142 Introduction to Cinema Studies

East Asian Studies
- 221 Second Language Pedagogy

English
- 200 Foundations of Literary Studies
- 271 Critical Theory

Government
Course Offerings

GM125f  Elementary German I  Introductory course for students with little or no previous knowledge of German. Development of all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communicative and interactive acquisition of grammar and vocabulary via study of contemporary life in the German-speaking countries. Audiovisual materials and integrated multimedia accompany textbook instruction.  Four credit hours.  BRADLEY

GM126s  Elementary German II  Continuation of Elementary German I to further develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Communicative and interactive acquisition of grammar and vocabulary via study of contemporary life in the German-speaking countries. Audiovisual materials accompany textbook instruction and integrated multimedia. Prerequisite: German 125 or appropriate score on the German placement exam.  Four credit hours.  MANEKTALA-BRAUN

GM127f  Intermediate German I: Structures in Cultural Contexts  Grammar review at the intermediate level with continued practice of speaking and listening skills, readings and interactive communication based on topics from German culture and literature, emphasis on practical uses of the language. First introduction to extended readings and writings in German via cultural contexts. Prerequisite: German 126 or appropriate score on the German placement exam.  Four credit hours.  MANEKTALA-BRAUN

GM128s  Intermediate German II: Readings in Cultural Contexts  Continuation of Intermediate German I. Practice and review of written and oral communication skills emphasizing formation of correct, idiomatic structures. Strives to build reading skills and to introduce a variety of cultural ideas and contexts through selection of literary and cultural readings/viewings in German. Preparation for transition to in-depth study in a variety of areas of German studies. Prerequisite: German 127 or appropriate score on the German placement exam.  Four credit hours.  BRADLEY

GM129f  Conversation Group  Review and practice for students at the intermediate level. A selection of written, visual, and audio German language and culture sources will provide the basis for discussion and conversation. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major and minor. May be repeated for credit. Nongraded. Prerequisite: German 126.  One credit hour.  WILLIAMSON

GM130s  Conversation Group  Review and practice for students at the intermediate level. A selection of written, visual, and audio German language and culture sources will provide the basis for discussion and conversation. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major and minor. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: German 127 or, with permission, concurrent enrollment in German 126. Nongraded.  One credit hour.  WILLIAMSON
[GM151] Dungeons and Dragons: The Middle Ages in German Literature (in English) A selection of readings from the Middle Ages to the present. Particular focus on representations of medieval popular topics such as knightly adventures, magic, and voyaging, as well as changing cultural notions of class, gender, and love. Poetry and prose readings, alongside selections of popular operatic and filmic adaptations. Conducted in English. 

[GM231f] Introduction to German Studies This first course beyond the language sequence continues the emphasis on composition and conversation, as well as oral presentations of research. Introduction to German studies through examination of social and historical developments from the age of Luther to Germany’s unification in 1990 as reflected in literature, art, politics, and philosophy. Emphasis on analysis of aesthetic and intellectual accomplishments representative of major periods in German, Austrian, and Swiss history. May be repeated once for additional credit. Prerequisite: German 128. 

[GM234] German Culture through Film An introduction and exploration of German culture through analysis of German-language cinema from its inception in the 1890s through the post-unified cinema of the present. Focus of popular and avant-garde films and notions of mass culture, education, propaganda, entertainment, and identity formation. Conducted in German. Prerequisite: German 128. 

[GM236s] ConTexts in German Culture Introduction to critical analysis of select genres from German, Austrian, and Swiss cultures. Topics vary but through deepening of close reading skills of written, performed, and visual texts, this course examines socio-historical moments in their relationship to key notions and genres, including women writers, identity and crisis, comedy, fairy tales, and the canon. Focus continues on composition and conversation with development of critical, written, and interpretive analysis, and student presentations. Prerequisite: German 128 or equivalent. 

[GM237f] The German Fairy Tale in Popular Culture (in English) Fairy tales permeate our culture on every level. Examines the role of the fairy tale (foktales, romantic variations, and Disney versions alike) in the construction of culture along with their adaptations in the media, comics, literature, art, and film. In analyzing the historical and social development of fairy tales as a genre, students are introduced to methods of literary analysis and cultural criticism. Counts toward the German major or minor. Open to first-year students. Conducted in English. 

[GM252] Mission Impossible: Multicultural German Literature and Film (in English) Introduction to German-speaking literature and film by writers and filmmakers of African (Ayim, Oguntoye), Japanese (Tawada), Jewish (Celan, Honigmann), Romanian (Müller, Wagner), Russian (Kaminer), and Turkish (Özdamar, Zaimoglu, Akin) backgrounds. Emphasis on contemporary literature, with background readings from the Enlightenment through the present. Examination of creative approaches to issues of migration, exile, and globalization, with focus on language politics, identity formation, gender, history and memory, and the multicultural city. Counts toward the German major or minor. Open to first-year students. Conducted in English. 

[GM263] Weird Fictions (in English) This reading- and writing-intensive seminar considers the construction of the genre of science fiction (broadly defined). We will read short prose and novels from the 19th century to the present by authors such as ETA Hoffmann, Patrick Süskind, and Franz Kafka, and we will view films of Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, and others. In addition we will read texts that function as hybrid and complementary permutations of science fiction such as magical realism, speculative fiction, and utopian/dystopian fictions. Conducted in English.

[GM264] Kafka and his Contexts (in English) Franz Kafka (1883-1924) plays a major role in the construction of the modern and postmodern literary canon of the 20th century. We will read his short stories and parables, selected letters, and journal entries. We will approach Kafka both as an author who made inventive incursions into the universes of Romantic inspirations, including Heinrich von Kleist and E.T.A. Hoffmann, and as an influence on the narrative fictions of modernist and postmodernist authors who incorporated Kafkaesque elements, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Italo Calvino, Juan Rulfo, and Harukui Murakami. Conducted in English.

[GM297f] Violence, Atrocity, and Trauma: Europe 1914-1945 Listed as History 397B. 

[GM298As] Environmental Humanities: Nature Philosophy’s Roots In this environmental humanities course, we will consider the roots of contemporary ecological thought in German philosophy and culture. Beginning with the clash of Enlightenment and Romanticism around 1800, we will trace the subterranean legacy of some wild ideas about the relationship between humans and the natural world. Reading philosophical texts alongside literary works, we will consider the echoes of this thought into the present. In conversation with Maine-based organizations and contemporary philosophers, we will discuss phenomenological (Goethean) science and theories of sympoeisis and even do some experiments of our own.

[GM298Bs] Weimar Culture: Germany Between the World Wars Listed as History 398C.
GM329f  Current Topics  An informal weekly meeting for students at the advanced level for conversation practice. Source materials include newspaper and magazine articles, contemporary German film, television broadcasts, and podcasts, along with other media. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major or minor. May be repeated for credit.  
Prerequisite:  German 128. Nongraded.  One credit hour.  WILLIAMSON

GM330s  Current Topics  An informal weekly meeting for students at the advanced level for conversation practice. Source materials include newspaper and magazine articles, contemporary German film, television broadcasts and podcasts, along with other media. Conducted in German. Does not count toward the language requirement or the German major or minor. May be repeated for credit.  
Prerequisite:  A 200-level German course. Nongraded.  One credit hour.  WILLIAMSON

GM342f  Contested Subjects in German Culture  Introduction to critical analysis of contested subjects in German and German-speaking cultures. While topics vary, this course will refine close reading skills of written and visual texts, including poetry, works of art, drama, short stories, prose, and film that focus on culturally contested topics. Focus on critical, written and interpretive analysis, student presentations, and exposure to relevant cultural, theoretical, and historical sources. Conducted in German.  Prerequisite:  A 200-level German course.  Four credit hours.  MANEKTALA-BRAUN

[GM368]  Sex, Madness, and Transgression  A selection of texts from the Age of Goethe through the present, each prominently featuring the representation of acts of transgression: social, mental, or sexual. One of our guiding questions will therefore be how and for what purpose literature deals with cultural, political, and sexual norms and deviations. Texts include Büchner's  Woyzeck, Schnitzler's  Reigen, Dürrenmatt's  Das Versprechen, Böll's  Katharina Blum, and Jelinek's  Die Klavierspielerin, as well as a number of theoretical sources. Conducted in German.  Prerequisite:  A 200-level German course.  Four credit hours.  L.

GM491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual projects in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work.  Prerequisite:  Permission of the instructor.  Two to four credit hours.  FACULTY

GM493s  Seminar: Ideologies and Identities  Critically assesses ways German art and culture engage with ideologies and questions of personal, cultural, and political concepts of identity. Among key ideas, the persistent “German question,” along with notions of  Heimat, regional and transnational belonging, gender, language politics, class, race. Discussions based on representative readings (poetry, prose, and drama), forms of artistic expression (music, visual art, and film), theory and secondary literature from the Enlightenment through the present-day Berlin Republic. Students write weekly response papers and short critical essays, participate in a writing workshop, complete a final research paper in German, and present research findings in a public symposium.  Prerequisite:  A 300-level German course and senior standing.  Four credit hours.  L.  BRADLEY